

Can you Hear Me?

by Define-Sanity

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Summary: He lived in a routine, and he liked it that way. Every day after school Hiccup would wander down town, choosing to spend the remaining daylight hours in the expanse library, hidden away among the rows of books. Little did he know however, that his routine would soon change when he met Jack, an odd, quiet boy who would introduce him to a whole new point of view.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1

It had become routine for him. Every day after school Hiccup would wander down town, choosing to spend the remaining daylight hours in the expanse library, hidden away among the rows of books and comforted by the worn pages that greeted him like old friends. It was there he would wait until his dad got off work, and would then drive him to his cello lessons. The library at school seemed like a joke compared to the old red brick building that had ivy crawling up the sides. Not to mention, there was one spot tucked away between the mystery section and the scifi that had a window seat that, in Hiccup's opinion, let in just enough light, and offered a perfect view of little garden patch that the community center had set up just outside.

>It was here that Hiccup could spend hours in blissful solitude, opening his mind to new stories and adventures, and completely lose himself in lands where he was not an awkward, stuttering, stumbling 96 pound ball of teenage hormones.
It had been a fairly normal day so far for the boy. The sun shone high in the sky as Hiccup hopped off the c93 bus, barely escaping a puddle that sat right in front of the bus' doors. It had been raining horribly for the past week, not that Hiccup particularly cared, as he spent most of his days indoors anyway. But he had to admit, the warm sun was a nice change, and reminded him that spring was just around the corner. It wasn't a long walk to the library, a short cut through the ally behind Gobber's body shop cut Hiccup's usual walking time in half, and every other day or so he would stop to chat with Gobber himself, that is, if the

burly man could spare the time. Today however was not a day like that, and although Hiccup felt a little guilty for feeling so, he was secretly happy that the man was no where in sight. Being half way through a new mystery, Hiccup was itching to crawl up into his perch and continue reading.

>Finally the aging stone steps came into view, and Hiccup couldn't hide the grin that took over his freckled face as he climbed up the familiar stairs, and into his home away from home. Wasting no time, he passed the front desk, offering a soft 'hello' to the elderly woman who sat behind the counter in passing, and scurried off to the mystery section. However, when he made it passed the third row, just before the scifi section began, Hiccup noticed something.
There was another boy sitting in his window seat. He sat in the corner across from where Hiccup usually did, his knees pulled up, and a note book delicately perched upon his lap. His head was bowed, curious silver hair making it difficult to place the boy's exact age.

>Hiccup pursed his lips. This wasn't a part of his routine, but not one to give up something that was rightfully his so easily, Hiccup advanced, a dog eared copy of an obscure novel in his hand. Swallowing a lump in his throat, Hiccup moved forward in slow shuffling steps until he was no more than an arms length away.
"Excuse me.." He said in a soft voice, his fingers worriedly drumming against the spine of his book. Up close he could see the damaged ends of the boy's hair, and came to the conclusion that the white was a little more than bleach, or some sort of dye. This calmed him some, now realizing that the mystery boy must have been around his age, perhaps a year or two older at most. "Excuse me." Hiccup repeated, a little louder when he got no response. The boy stared intently at his paper, completely engrossed in his work. Deciding not to waste his breath on another attempt, he tapped the boy on the shoulder, and wasn't surprised when the other jumped at the touch. Confused chocolate brown eyes locked onto his, a pencil still poised between long, nimble fingers. The boy said nothing, but his eyes spoke for him.

>"I... Was wondering if I could sit there." Hiccup asked, pointing to the other end of the window seat. The boy glanced over to where Hiccup pointed, then back to him and gave a small shrug. Satisfied with that answer, Hiccup thanked him and clambered into his favored seat. It was odd having someone else there, but the soft pencil scratching that came from the boy's note pad was oddly soothing. Soon enough Hiccup felt comfortable again, and dove into his book.
Hours passed, and soon enough Hiccup felt his pocket vibrate, alerting him of a message from his father saying that it was time to go. When Hiccup looked up, he saw that the boy was still there, although this time he had his pencil clenched between his teeth as he peered out the window. Gross, but not an uncommon habit. Hiccup brushed it off as he slid out of his seat and scurried back to the library's front entrance.

>Strangely enough, when he returned the next day, he saw that the boy was still there. Same white hair and dirty sneakers and well used notebook, the only noticeable difference was today his jacket was grey instead of blue.
"Oh.. You again.." Hiccup whispered, slipping back into his seat. He hadn't expected the boy to be there, but didn't protest to his company. He went back to his book, while the boy busied himself with his writing, or drawing, or whatever it was that he was doing.

>The next day continued like this, and the day after that. Eventually, Hiccup grew used to seeing the boy, and began to count it as another reason to hurry to the library each day.
"Hello again."

He said quietly, offering a smile to the boy who didn't look up right away. Once Hiccup settled, the plush seat shifting with his weight, warm chocolate brown eyes glanced over to him, straight white teeth showing with a playful grin. The boy rose his hand and gave a tiny wave, greeting Hiccup silently, then looking back down at the dirty pages of his notebook.

>"You know," Hiccup began, his fingers trailing along the cover of a dated medical text book. The feeling of the glossy cover brought comfort to him as he struggled to make conversation. "I guess since I see you every day, It'd be nice to know your name." The corners of his lips twitched upwards an an awkward attempt of a smile, a dull hope pounding in him that perhaps it would hide nervousness that seeped from his every pore. Thankfully, the boy didn't seem to notice. In fact, he didn't even look up at all. Frowning a tad, Hiccup went back to his book, feeling foolish for even attempting. In his mind he began to list off excuses, mentally fighting with himself to try again. 'He didn't hear you, idiot. Whatever he's doing, its obviously important. Don't bug him!' Were only a few of the things he told himself. None the less, he decided to try again, not wanting to quit just yet.
Leaning forward, he gently tapped the boy's knee, causing him to jolt in surprise. Hiccup felt a twinge of guilt for frightening him, but that feeling was washed away when a soft smile greeted him. He returned the action, clearing his throat before opening his mouth to speak. However, before a single sound passed his lips, the boy rose a finger to his mouth and made a dull 'shushing noise. Of course. They were in a library. They had to be quiet. But this rose another problem. Settling back into his seat, Hiccup worried his lower lip between his teeth as he pondered how to communicate with the boy if he could not speak. But before he could figure how to handle this delema for himself, the sound of rustling paper brought him back to reality, just as a note book was thrust into his lap.

>Hiccup looked at the book, then back up at the boy who continued to smile, a pencil held in his outstretched hand. Excitement coursed through Hiccup as he accepted the pencil, pleased that at last he could at last hold a conversation. It was better this way, in Hiccup's opinion at least. He had never really been too fond of talking, finding the trouble of searching for the correct words and common interests horribly awkward. At least through the written word, he could see his thoughts before anyone else, and a few swipes of an eraser could eradicate any stupidity from the paper.
He handed the note book back to the the boy along with a short list of questions, only to get an amused look and a raised eyebrow in return, along with the book shortly after.

>Beneath his neat cursive writing, were a series of replies written in small, cartoonish block letters.
_ -Since I see you every day pretty much, you mind telling me your name?_

> Jack. Whats yours? C:_

> -Also, how old are you?

> I'm 17, and I'm going to guess you're about 14-15._

> -What are you always doing in that book?

> You mean the one you're writing in, and holding in your hands right now? ;P Well thats a secret mister nose.**

>Hiccup read over Jack's answers, and tried not to flush in embarrassment. Now that he had the book back, his questions seemed rather.. Childish. Never the less Hiccup took back the pencil and began to write once more.
_ -I'd tell you my name, but you'd never be able to pronounce it. But ever since I moved here, people started calling by my nickname, Hiccup. And I'm sixteen actually._

>He handed the book back to Jack, whose shoulders shook as he tried to hold back a chuckle.
*_ Hiccup, eh? Alright. I'll accept that for now. Where are you from?_**

> -Iceland.

>The next hour or so passed like this, the two boys innocently asking each other questions, and quizzing each other. Hiccup found it surprisingly easy to talk to Jack, although, that could have very well been due to the fact that there was no talking to be had. Whatever the case may have been, Hiccup was disappointed when he got his father's usual message that it was time to go. With an exaggerated sigh, he wrote a quick note to Jack saying he had to leave. The boy frowned a bit, and actually seemed a little down trodden.
*_ Alright then. I'll see you tomorrow?_**
>Hiccup smiled a bit and nodded.
_ -Same place, same time._

>With that, he gathered his things, and gave Jack a wave as he hurried out, not wanting to keep his father waiting any longer.<p>

* * *

><p>Over the next few weeks Hiccup began to include Jack when he thought of his daily routine, and at school thoughts of the boy often came to mind. He had picked up on many of Jack's interests, and his off beat Spence of humor, and when certain things he saw through out the day reminded him of the boy, Hiccup would be sure to tell him later on.
He entered the library feeling significantly lighter than he did three weeks ago. Not even the usual jeers of his class mates bothered him as much. It felt good to have someone to talk to for once. A friend that wasn't trapped between sheets of paper or written in ink, and would respond to his calls. He found that Jack had a shared problem, and had a hard time making friends. Although, Hiccup wasn't entirely sure why. Although he had never heard the boy speak, Jack seemed to be rather outgoing and cheerful for the most part. Then again, stories of his misadventures made Hiccup question if Jack's mischeivious nature had anything to do with it.

>Whatever the reason, Hiccup enjoyed his company none the less, and felt relaxed in his presence and free to let his guard down.
He greeted Jack with a playful smack on the knee, a gentle teasing action to alert the other boy that he was there. Jack grinned and tried to swat Hiccup with his note book as he passed, a weak revenge for making causing his pencil to slip.

> Wow. Rude. :c_ Jack complained, turning to a new page in his note book before he handed it to Hiccup, who rolled his eyes at the words.

> -Hello to you too snowball. Hiccup replied with a teasing smirk. He delighted in the way Jack's face scrunched up when he read the all too familiar nickname.

> Again with the hair. I repeat. RUDE.

à² __**_à² **_

>Hiccup snickered and rolled his eyes once more. It was much too easy to tease the boy, even if Jack did take the jibes with good nature. It was something he liked about Jack. He was so.. Easy going. It was a pleasant change of pace.
_ -Yeah yeah, I'm rude and you're a snowflake. Live with it. Any way, I have to leave early today, so be nice. _

>Jack's face turned into a tell tale frown as he read this, and looked at Hiccup quizzically.
*_ Sick of me already? ;0; You're breaking my heart!*_

> -Cute Jack. But I have to bus all the way down to east 49th.

> Why?_
> -My dad is working late tonight, and can't drive me to my cello class.
>Ah. So that explained it. Jack nodded in understanding, although, he would be lying if he said it wasn't disappointed.
** Fine, fine. Leave me rot my 'frend!' See if I care.**
> -You spelled 'friend' wrong.
> SHUT UP BUTT MUNCH. I'M IN DISTRESS. ,A,**
>That made Hiccup giggle, and he had to press a hand to his mouth to suppress the sounds he made.
_ -Well, I'm sure you are. But I'm afraid I have to go. _
> Yes, thats right. Laugh at me. Its not like I have feelings!**
> -Yes yes, I know. You're a delicate flower in the heat of May. Now do you want to come with me or not?
>The joking smile Jack had been donning wilted as his brows creased in confusion. Was Hiccup really asking him to hang out outside of the library?
** You want me to go with you?*
> -Well, if you want. I've only bussed there once before, and I'd be nice to actually talk instead of write.
>Hiccup watched Jack read, and felt a rock settle in his stomach as he watched Jack's face morph into an expression of real distress. Had he said something wrong? Too straight forward? He almost didn't notice when the notebook was thrust back into his lap.
**_ I'd love to. C:*_
>Those three words calmed Hiccup's nerves, and brought a smile to his face. However, when he realized there was more to the message, he felt the dread return.
**_ I'd love to. C: But... I think I wanna come clean about something..*_
>Hiccup looked up at Jack, taking note of how the boy's smile didn't quite reach his eyes, and how his fingers quivered ever so slightly. He handed the notebook back, nodding as silent conformation to go on. Jack obliged, but took a little longer than he should have to write out his reply.
** Honestly.. I would love to hang out with you. You're a great guy.. But I haven't really been honest with you. I don't know how great of a conversation I can hold up with out my note book.**
>Jack hung his head as Hiccup read, feeling ashamed for not coming clean earlier. Meanwhile, Hiccup felt his heart race, his jaw falling slack as the next four words he read made his chest clench.
** Because Hiccup.. I'm deaf.**

2. Chapter 2

_Thank you everyone for the positive reviews, I really appreciate the feed back. You are all wonderful! To answer a few questions, Yes, this fic will eventually be hijack central, but a few other side pairings may be introduced later. _

_Also, because I am a total poo-poo head, I actually have this story on my tumblr, and update there faster. The reason being... Well.. I tend to forget I have a fanfiction account since I spend less time here.. . _

* * *

><p>He felt terrible. Hiccup held his head in his hands as the bus rumbled down the highway, jostling his small body whenever it turned or hit an unfortunate bump in the road. The sun had long since set

when rush hour traffic began to clog the road. This was both a blessing and a curse as it gave the boy time alone with his thoughts. His cello was left at the studio as traveling with the clunky case on the bus was a feat in itself for the scrawny boy. Class hadn't gone well today, this much Hiccup knew without even looking up to see his instructor's un-amused face. It was understandable however, as his mind was elsewhere, constantly replaying the day's events over and over behind his eye lids.
I left him. I just left him.. Hiccup berated himself with this thought. As soon as he read those definitive three words he looked up at Jack with a look of pure shock. Hiccup's mouth opened and closed like a fish gasping for air on dry land as he struggled to choke out an apology. An apology that wouldn't have been heard..

>Hiccup groaned, letting his head hang between his knees as his hands gripped painfully tight on his dark auburn hair. A man in a grey business suit that had been sitting beside him, scooted to the next seat over, mental images of the strange boy being sick all over the back of the bus playing over in his mind. Hiccup didn't notice the man's actions however, as he had a more pressing problem. Jack was deaf and he just ran like a coward. How was he to react to such a thing? With another heavy sigh he sat up in his seat, his jade green eyes glancing out the window at the city as they rolled by. He had to fix this. He vowed. He had to make it up to Jack.
The next day he arrived at the library a little earlier than usual, the plan he had made during a sleepless night replaying in his head. He had practically sprinted from his final class in order to catch the earlier bus, and was forced to stand in the aisle as every seat seemed to be taken. (Well, all but one. But Hiccup wasn't too keen on sitting next to the grouchy old man with the walking stick, and who shot glares at the back of his head through the whole half hour ride.) Needless to say, it was a relief to finally get back out into the outside air, that didn't stink of sweat, and for some reason or another, sheep. He tried not to think of the peculiar stench as he scooted past Gobber's body shop, and rounded the corner, nearing on his destination. Once inside the library, Hiccup took a small detour, stopping to browse the reference section before heading off to his usual perch.

>With his new book clutched firmly in his calloused hands, he walked forward with confidence. However, once he spotted the familiar head of silver-white hair, that confidence dwindled like sand in an hour glass. Jack sat with his legs pulled up onto the window seat, his head resting against the cool glass of window as his eyes followed something out in the garden that went unseen to Hiccup. His note book sat at his feet, his shoes disgaured on floor beside his back pack with little care.
Hiccup swallowed a lump in his throat, feeling much like he did the first day he met Jack. When Jack was just, 'that one boy' to him. Slowly, he walked forward, his book hugged close to his chest, as if it would shield him from whatever would happen next. Jack didn't notice Hiccup until the boy was close enough to touch him if needs be.

>Jack jumped, shocked by Hiccup's sudden appearance and swiveled in his spot until his long legs dangled over the edge of the window seat. He opened his mouth, but this time it was Hiccup who shushed him with a raised hand. Jack blinked stupidly, his eyes following Hiccup's hand as a slim finger pointed over to the note book at his side.
He looked between Hiccup and the book, before carefully flipping to a fresh sheet and handing it over along with his pencil. Hiccup accepted the items, and crouched on the ground with both of the books balanced delicately on his knees. He took a long time to write his message, Jack leaning forward to read over his shoulder as

he did so.

>-Listen, I'm so, so, so sorry for yesterday. I'm an ass hole. I just didn't know what to do. I've never met anyone who was deaf before, and it just came as a shock. I'm just, so fucking sorry. It wasn't anything you did, I'm just an idiot.

>He handed the book back, and stared up at Jack as he read over the page. Jack's lips moved as he read, and when he was done he held out his hand, silently asking for the pencil.
**Yeah. I agree. You're an idiot.**

>-I'm so sorry._

>You're an idiot, but not for the reason you said.
Hiccup furrowed his brows and looked up at Jack, his large green eyes questioning. Jack patted the spot beside him, urging him to sit beside him.

>You're only an idiot because you said you've never met a deaf person. But you've met me, and we held up a pretty good conversation even though I can't hear. Why do things have to change?
Hiccup read over Jack's shoulder as he wrote, his breath warm on the boy's arm. When he took the notebook back, he felt the weight in his stomach lessen, and morph into a feeling of foolishness instead.

>-I know.. I'm just sorry. I over reacted.

>Tell me about it. :c_

>-Do you forgive me?

>Hmm. No. I'm just waiting here for you because you make me look hot in comparison._

>Jack grinned impishly as Hiccup looked from the abused page of paper up to him, and back again.
-wow. Rude.

3. Chapter 3

It was nice to settle back into his routine, Hiccup thought. Every day after school, he would hurry out the door and bolt to the bus stop where he would just barely catch the c93 downtown, and meet Jack at their window seat between the sci-fi and the mystery section at the library. As the days wore on, the teen had learnt to look past Jack's disability, and even found himself forgetting time and time again, only to be reminded after a failed attempt at speaking. Embarrassing, yes, but to be fair it was quite difficult to tell that Jack couldn't hear at times, especially when the other had so much to say.

>Rain lightly patted against the window as Hiccup watched a pair of birds hop around in the muddy garden, searching for their next meal. It was a light spring rain that had been sprinkling on and off throughout the week, allowing the sun to occasionally poke through, and making it near impossible to dress for the weather. Hiccup looked forward to when the weather grew warmer, and he could bid good riddance to this irritable drizzle. His book lay forgotten in his lap, the pages dog eared and marked by his hand. It had been a while now since he'd picked up the text, but Hiccup was eager to learn every word the book had to offer. While his attempts had been frustrating, at the moment everything felt peaceful, and Hiccup liked it like that.
The boy stifled a yawn and let his eyes wander over to Jack, whose head was bowed as his hand feverishly worked his tooth-marked pencil over the pages of his notebook. Hiccup often wondered what his friend was up to, and would be lying if he hadn't thought to keep the book and flip through the tarnished pages to simply quell his curiosity. However, Hiccup managed to restrain

himself, but not without great difficulty.

>He watched Jack work for a long time, feeling somehow soothed by the sounds of the rain and the gentle scratching of the pencil. Hiccup hugged his own book to his chest, his knees pulled up as he settled in his seat. There was something simply.. Hypnotic about Jack, that Hiccup couldn't easily place. He had begun to notice it about a week ago, and began to wonder if maybe it was that certain trait that had originally kept drawing him back to the boy, where with anyone else he would have simply ignored. Perhaps it was those laugh lines that appeared when Jack smiled, or those charming dimples that made him seem so much younger and almost innocent. Maybe it was even those deep brown, puppy dog eyes that were just so expressive. As Hiccup pondered this thought, he hadn't realized he'd been caught staring.
Jack peered over the rim of his note book, then end of his pencil clenched between his teeth. He chuckled, gaining Hiccup's attention in the process. Hiccup blinked, coming back to reality and feeling his face heat up in embarrassment. "How long..?" He mouthed, drawing out each syllable to give Jack a fair chance at reading his lips. The other just grinned, holding up five fingers, then waved his hand dismissively. Hiccup nodded, feeling foolish as he drew his book back up, hiding his face behind the covers.

>He hadn't been hiding for long however, as for the first time since Hiccup had picked up the book, Jack noticed the cover. His eyebrows furrowed in confusion, before realization sparked in his mind. Quickly, he tapped Hiccup roughly on the knee, not stopping until the brunette lowered the pages to look at him. Hiccup cocked his head to the side, silently asking what the fuss was about. Surely his all too embarrassing blush wasn't all that fascinating.
Of course, it wasn't the blush. Jack jabbed his finger at the cover of his book, repeating the motion until Hiccup turned it over in his hands, taking a look at the title himself. "Oh.." Hiccup chuckled sheepishly, even though he knew it was only a matter of time before Jack took notice. He had been studying the pages since the day he written that apology, and while Hiccup had tried to hide the title, he had to admit that it came as a surprise that Jack hadn't noticed sooner. He lowered the thick book, his hand lightly resting on the cover and half hiding the title from view. Carefully, Jack took his wrist, his fingers cool against Hiccup's skin, and moved his hand so he could get a closer look. When Jack looked up again, His eyes spoke volumes, shock and confusion swirling in the deep brown iris'.

>It was then, for the first time Hiccup heard Jack speak. " Is tha' f' me?" His words were hard to understand, like his tongue was too thick for his mouth, moving awkwardly as he tried to speak words he had never heard for himself.
Hiccup couldn't respond at first, amazed that Jack could even speak at all, but a sharp tapping on his knee brought him back to his senses. Hiccup blinked, then shrugged before offering his friend a crooked grin as his hand slid across the seat to retrieve a sheet of scrap paper. He wrote over the three rounds of tic tac toe, smudging the pencil markings as his hands began to sweat. Although he tried to look confident, the teen was fighting with a fit of nerves. What if he was wrong? He wondered. Jack had relied on writing so far, what if he didn't know, and Hiccup's attempt came off as offensive? He tried not to think about that slim possibility.

> -I wanted it to be a surprise.. But yeah.

>Jack gasped, the corners of his mouth twitching upwards as a breathy laugh escaped his lips. There, on the cover of the book was the simple title: 'American Sign Language Dictionary'. He was in a state of disbelief, touched that the other would even consider doing something like that for him. While no words were said, the lanky arms

that embraced Hiccup, and the nervous laughter that chimed like little bells in his ear had been enough to get the point across. Hiccup was knocked back, his back hitting the wall behind him. He ignored the slight pain, a grin breaking out on his own face as he hugged Jack back, the dictionary sliding of his lap and landing with a dull clunk on the floor. All negative thoughts left Hiccup's mind as he sat there, smiling against Jack's shoulder. Everything just felt.. Right.<p>

4. Chapter 4

Another two weeks went by, and Hiccup was disappointed when he never heard Jack speak again. Not wanting to offend the boy, he didn't bring it up, or question Jack's reasoning for silence. (The last thing he wanted was another reason to apologise to the boy.) Thankfully however, with Jack's help Hiccup had begun to pick up sign language at a much quicker rate, allowing the two a new way to communicate. Although he was far from able to keep up with Jack's quick fingers, a simple conversation was easy enough.

>'What-is-your-name-?' Jack asked, his hands stringing together the question slowly, a hopeful smile on his face. Hiccup crinkled his nose, his own hands trembling ever so slightly as he took the time to remember his alphabet.
'My-name-is-H-I-C-C-U-P... H-A-D-D-O-C-K' Jack grinned, nodding and clapping his finger tips together in quiet applause and approval. They were sitting across from each other, each taking up half of the window seat. Jack leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees on his crossed legs, his shoes once more cast aside and laying on the floor next to them.

>During this time, Jack had told Hiccup bits and peices of his life, explaining the dynamics of his speech therapy, and what it was like being unable to hear.
It wasn't so bad, Jack assured him. He had been born deaf, and while it was an inconvenience, Jack had long since adjusted and could live his life just as easily as any one who could hear would. Or, that's what he told him. He attended Mary Joyce's school for the deaf and hearing impared, so education wasn't a problem for Jack, the curriculum set for those with disabilities like his own. What was a problem however, was his short attention span that made it difficult for the teen to focus on his studies. This much Hiccup had gathered on his own after hearing one too many tales of the hijinks that Jack had managed to get himself into. Quite frankly, Hiccup felt a little bad for the teachers who had to put up with the obnoxious and mischeivious teen.

>Hiccup too dwelled on his life when asked, but not in such detail. Compared to Jack, Hiccup felt he was rather dull. He lived in routine. school, library, cello then home where he would spend the rest of his night on homework or one of his 'inventions.' Although, Hiccup made it a point to leave out the part about his obscure hobbies. Enough people found his tinkering odd, and the last thing he wanted was for his new friend to think the same, or have a reason to poke fun at him like anyone else he had dared to tell.
Some time passed, and Jack took a look out the window with his hands still poised, half way through forming another message. He smiled when he saw that the rain had let up, allowing the sun to peek through the clouds and shine through the dirty window they sat by. The teen then turned to Hiccup, his eyes alight with a childish mirth as he signed a simple sentence. "Do-you-want-to-go-out?"

>It took Hiccup a few seconds longer than it should have to decipher Jack's hand motions, but soon enough it clicked, and he glanced out

the window himself with uncertainty. They hadn't really left the library together.. In fact, he had always arrived after Jack did, and left before. Did Jack ever leave? Hiccup wondered.
The boy hadn't noticed Jack's annoyed pout until he leaned forward, snapping his fingers twice nearly an inch from Hiccup's face. The brunette flinched, then gave the other a lopsided and appologetic grin. 'O-K' He signed, then paused before continuing again. 'Where-do-you-go?'

>Jack shrugged and hopped down from his seat. He didn't mention Hiccup's sloppy sentance, but made a mental note to spend a little bit more time on grammer in the future. He had a few ideas on where they could go, but right now all he could think of is now nice the outside air must be. Hiccup watched as Jack pulled on his sneakers, and couldn't help but crinkle his nose at how down right filthy the shoes were. He himself wasn't a stickler for such things, but he was pretty sure that beneath all the dingy stains, those shoes were white at one point. At least now he knew that Jack did have a life out side of the library.
Hiccup managed to wipe the look of disgust from his face just in time to avoid Jack's eager eyes. The white haired boy stood and slung his back pack over his shoulder, a small smirk playing on his lips as he held out his hand to Hiccup. He jerked his head in the direction of the exit, silently asking the question that perched on the tip of his tongue. Hiccup glanced at the out stretched hand, but quickly busied himself with retrieving his own bag. "One minute." He mouthed slowly, once more drawing out each syllable carefully for Jack's sake. The boy in question huffed and rolled his eyes impatiently, his hand fisting into the pocket of his hoodie, now tired of being ignored. When Hiccup looked up again, he tried not to snicker at the childish pout that settled on Jack's face.

>'Not-that-long.' Hiccup argued, keeping the sentence short for his own sanity's sake. Sign language was a lot more difficult than he initially thought, and couldn't help but wonder how Jack managed to keep track of so many hand movements. The other boy huffed, throwing his shoulders back in an exaggerated, and unnessecary show of dramatics. Hiccup ignored this and tossed his own back back over his own shoulders, letting out a tiny grunt as his back hunched forward to balance the weight. He grinned over at Jack, who returned the look with an arched eyebrow and puzzled expression of his own.
The two shared an awkward silence before Hiccup cleared his throat and broke eye contact, oblivious to the reasoning behind Jack's stares.

>"What?" Hiccup mouthed, shrugging his shoulders a tad. Jack just shook his head and waved his hand dismissively, choosing save his inquiries on the heavy load for later. Once again, the pale haired boy pointed towards the exit, with more determination this time.
'Time-is-wasting' Jack insisted. This caused Hiccup to sigh, but comply none the less.

>'We-have-one-hour.' He argued as they quickly shambled across the worn and tarnished maroon carpet. Jack walked with long strides, quickly passing Hiccup without even trying.
"Hey, wai-" Hiccup stopped himself mid-sentance, realising that calling out to Jack would have been pointless. He adjusted the heavy weight on his back and sighed, adjusting his pace to match Jack's. "Stupid.." His hand reached out gripping onto Jack's sleeve, successfully stopping the other in his tracks. Jack looked down at Hiccup and gave an awkward chuckle.

>'I'm-sorry' He appologized with a shrug of his shoulders. Hiccup sighed, and gave the other a light repremanding smack on his arm for leaving him behind.<p>

Hiccup walked with an almost waddling gait. It wasn't particularly noticeable, his steps simply seeming to weigh more heavily on his right side. Jack didn't bring it up, but slowed his pace to make it easier for the other boy to keep up. For some on with such apparent hip pain, Jack did silently wonder why Hiccup insisted on carrying such a heavy load in his backpack, and even pondered if perhaps it was that weight itself that caused the awkward walk. Then again, Hiccup had mentioned that he had never been particularly graceful in his ways, so it also could have very well been a bump caused by a fall that made walking so uncomfortable. Whatever the reason, Jack made sure to keep an extra close eye on the boy should he tire or trip. Thankfully they didn't have far to go, so the former was less of a worry.

>As Jack pushed open the heavy swinging doors of the library, Hiccup braced himself for the sudden assault of noise from the traffic outside. He winced as an ambulance roared by, its siren shrieking and for a moment, he almost envied Jack for his inability to hear. Jack continued to walk, unfazed as he walked down the ancient cement steps. Hiccup stumbled as he trotted after Jack, his hand shooting out to grip the railing and steady himself. He felt his cheeks burn, and was grateful that Jack hadn't noticed his pathetic flailing.
"you know, it's times like this I'm kinda glad you're deaf.." Hiccup admitted to Jack's retreating figure. "you didn't hear that stupid sound I made." he followed at Jack's heels, hopping down the last three steps and releasing the railing. Jack turned and flashed Hiccup a smile as the boy once more returned to his side.

>Hiccup didn't want to admit it, but there was something about that smile that made his heart melt. He returned the smile, even daring to show a bit of tooth a grin pulled at his lips.
Then, Jack laughed and Hiccup's smile faded.

>By the time Hiccup had lost his last baby tooth, he had decided he hated the teeth that seemed too large for his small mouth and poked at his thin lips. Now Jack was laughing at him, and an uncomfortable wave of uncertainty washed over him, and made him tighten his grip on the straps of his backpack. Hiccup's guard left him unprepared however for Jack's next choice of words.
The taller boy turned on his heel and walked backwards as his hands strung together a series of signs, the words small and easy enough for Hiccup to slowly decipher.

>"smile-like-that-again." Hiccup's forehead creased at the request, his eyes warily watching behind Jack for any possible obsicals. Reading Hiccup's expression, Jack pressed on. "I-like-it. You-remind-me-of-little-mouse."
Hiccup mouthed the words unconsciously as he read, pausing to struggle with the word 'mouse.' His eyes locked with Jack's as he rose his own hands to reply.

>'I-remind-you-what?' he asked, not even sure if he wanted to know the comparison.
'a-mouse.' Jack repeated with an eager grin. When Hiccup's expression remained confused, Jack puffed out his cheeks and sighed through his nose. He reached into the pocket of his olive green hoodie, and produced a well used plastic pen. The end of the pen looked as if it was left in the hands of a hungry rabbit it was so riddled with tooth marks, and the words 'slumber lodge hotel' had been almost completely rubbed off. Jack boldly reached out and took Hiccup's hand, holding it still as he wrote on the boy's exposed wrist.

>The touch sent a jolt of electricity up Hiccup's arm and down his spine and back again, making his lips twitch upwards just slightly.

He focused on the words that were being etched on his skin, and not on the cool, nimble fingers that held him in place. How was his skin so cold? Hiccup wondered.
'you remind me of a cute little mouse. C;' jack wrote, as usual adding a little smiley face at the end. Hiccup wasn't sure how to react to this, as normally being compared to a rodent would have sent him into a tizzy. However, jack made it sound like a compliment. He tried to take the pen from Jack, only to have the other whisk it away and tuck it securely behind his own ear. 'sign-to-me.' he instructed with a mischievous wink. Hiccup rolled his eyes, the fluttery feeling leaving his stomach at the other's antics.

>'I-don't-know-feeling-about-being-called-a.." he paused, trying to remember the word. When it didn't come to mind, he settled for finger spelling. "a-M-O-U-S-E" he frowned, but the look held no effect on Jack, who waved him off.
'not-even-if-you-were-a-very-cute-one?' Hiccup shook his head with certainty at the question.

>Jack snickered and reached to playfully pinch Hiccup's heavily freckled cheek.
"H-hey!" the boy squawked, batting the pale hand away and pouting childishly.

>'I-happen-to-like-mice.

So-accept-that-some-people-have-different-opinions .'
"fine."

Hiccup muttered. "then accept being called a mouse isn't a compliment in my books."

>It was now Jack's turn to be confused, as his strength didn't lay in lip reading. 'Say-that-again? I-don't-understand.'" He asked, his dark brows knitting together while his eyes flicked from Hiccup's loosely clenched fists, to his unamused expression. An all too familiar worry sat like a rock in Jack's stomach, as his imagination ran wild, thinking up all the hurtful things Hiccup could have said.

'People-don't-just-speak-in-front-of-me-unless-its -about-me.

What-did-you-say?'
The other boy sighed and ran his fingers through his wind tousled hair and processed Jack's message. Hiccup was about to raise his hands to ask for Jack to repeat himself, when the sounds of yet another siren met his ears. Hiccup flinched, and couldn't help but wonder who the clutz was that kept hurting themselves, and needed two ambulances. As the sirens grew louder, the other vehicles pulled off to the side of the road to allow the ambulance to pass.

>Hiccup then realized a second too late where they were walking. While they were talking, the two had walked the length of the side walk and came to a curb, and with Jack's back turned, the deaf boy had neither seen the street, nor heard the wail of the approaching vehicle.
"Jack, stop walking!" Hiccup called out, forgetting in his panic how useless the action had been. The other boy frowned, frustration becoming clear on his features. However, the look of frustration quickly morphed into one of panic as one last step sent him tumbling backwards into the street.

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

>Hiccup's hand shot out, his fingertips brushing against the sleeve of Jack's hoodie, before desperately clutching onto the warm cloth. It was in one swift movement that Hiccup sharply tugged Jack back onto the side walk, before he could topple into the street. The boy collided into Hiccup's chest, unintentionally knocking the smaller teen to the ground.
Hiccup groaned, feeling the back of his skull hit the pavement, causing stars danced before his vision.

>Seconds seemed like minutes as the two laid there, the ambulance

swiftly roaring passed them, and fading off into the distance. It was Jack who first moved, sluggishly shifting off of Hiccup's form, and kneeling by his side before carefully pulling him into a position to match his.
Hiccup slumped forward, causing a second wave of panic to course through Jack. His fingers sifted through Hiccup's hair, tentatively searching for any form of injury. During this time, Hiccup opened his heavy eyes, blearily blinking back the stinging in his head, and barely registering the prying questions of a stranger asking if they were alright.

>Hiccup nodded, his mouth moving against his will as he confirmed their safety.
"Fine, we're fine.." He slurred. When the world began to come back into focus, Hiccup slowly took in both his surroundings, and his changed position. His head lolled against Jack's shoulder listlessly, and he could feel the other teen's warm breath shifting his hair. There was a hand on the back of his head, and another holding him firmly around his shoulders. It felt nice and oddly comforting, and if it weren't for the cool feeling of the concrete beneath him, or the unfamiliar voice to his right, Hiccup would have considered just staying there.

>"Hey, I asked you a question, common, don't fade out again. Is he daft or something?" The accent sounded eerily similar to his father's, and perhaps it was that, that pulled Hiccup out of his daze. He glanced up and the first thing he noticed was a blinding shock of red that seemed to be constantly moving in small bouncing movements. "I said is he daft, or is he just out, or what's going on? I saw what happened and- hey, are you even listening?" It was then that Hiccup noticed a girl crouched down and looking at Jack expectantly. She balanced on the balls of her feet, and her hand was hovering a few inches away from Jack's shoulder, as if she were afraid to touch him. However, her pale blue eyes were filled with a mix of both concern and annoyance at both his and Jack's silence.
"He's deaf.." Hiccup mumbled, his voice heavy and dazed as his head throbbed. "Yelling will do as much good as... As something witty, and why am I on the ground?"

>The girl turned her attention back to Hiccup, and breathed a soft sigh of relief through her teeth.
"Had us spooked there for a minute. Thought we'd need another ambulance f'r you next." She said, the corners of her lips quirking in a small relieved smile. She stood slowly, and extended a hand to the pair that Hiccup hesitantly accepted. He tried not to wince as the red head pulled him to his feet and away from Jack's arms, but the throbbing in the back of his head was hard to ignore.

>Once the vertigo subsided, the brunette straightened his posture and offered a shaky smile. "Uh, thanks." He mumbled, his hands wringing together nervously, a feeling of self-consciousness settling over him. He never was graceful, and now that he had returned to his senses he noticed the occasional nosey stranger that would turn their head as they passed them.
The girl rolled her eyes, and wiped her hands on her dirty apron.

>"Well, you nearly gave m' mum a heart attack. She almost dropped her tray."
"Tray...Wait, where did you..?" Hiccup glanced over the girl's head, and spotted a small restaurant behind her. Standing in the door way was another woman, her impossibly long chestnut hair pulled back into a loose ponitail.

>"It's all good Mum!" The girl called, waving her hand to her mother, whose shoulders sagged with a relieved sigh.
When the older woman began to speak, the girl took a few steps toward her, and spoke louder so her voice would carry over the heads of the people that passed between them. Hiccup hadn't noticed when Jack had stood, and nearly jumped out of his skin when a cool, but gentle hand was placed

on his shoulder. Jack smiled sheepishly when Hiccup turned to look at him, eyes wide and startled.

>'Are-you-okay?' the taller of the two asked, his hand slipping away from Hiccup's shoulder, and seamlessly flowing into sign language.
"I'm fine, but what were you thinking?" Hiccup blurted, crossing his arms defiantly. Jack took a step back and creased his eyebrows, confusion and hurt etched in his features. Hiccup didn't know why, but he suddenly felt a rush of anger towards the other. Perhaps it was meant towards his carelessness, or the frustration at the fact that he was almost too late. But for whatever the reason, Hiccup couldn't ignore the twisting feeling in his stomach and the heat that rushed to his cheeks.

>'I-don't-understand.' Jack explained, his hands moving slowly and deliberately.
Hiccup sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Never mind.." he muttered, much to Jack's dismay. When he looked up again, Hiccup willed the annoyance to morph into relief for both of their safety, and put on a small smile. Although the brunette made a mental note to remind Jack of his near death experience at a later date, if for nothing else than a simple, 'I told you so.'

>'I-said-I-am-O-k.' He promised.

'Just-look-where-you-are-going.'
The sheepish smile returned to Jack's face once more at the meek translation, but the worry still lingered in his eyes, as if the promise didn't quite sit right with him.

>Before the conversation could carry on any longer, the boys were interrupted by the redheaded girl again.
She clapped her hands together loudly to gain their attention, and while the noise startled Hiccup, it was the curly mane of hair that Jack caught out of his peripheral that made his curious gaze wander over to her.

>"So now that we've established that we're very much alive and still three dimensional, 'ow about we go and celebrate at Th' Glen, yeah?' She proposed, bobbing her head towards each of the boys expectantly before jabbing a thumb behind her. The doorway where the older woman had once stood was now empty, making the painted logo of 'The Glen' now visible. Hiccup recalled the quaint restaurant from his bus route, but had never really considered going inside. Having no one really to go with, he couldn't justify spending his money to dine alone, even if it was just for a quick meal. Even with Jack with him, doubt hovered over him.
His fingers twitched nervously as he turned his attention to Jack for his opinion. After the embarrassment of what had just happened, Hiccup wanted nothing more than to return to the safety of his library, but he had a feeling that the decision wouldn't really be his to make.

>He didn't know why it surprised him that Jack wasn't paying attention, but it still caught him off guard when he caught the teen blatantly staring at the girl's chest. Even in his own opinion, it seemed to bother him more than it should have. It was then Hiccup realized that Jack's inability to hear could have meant that he hadn't heard the invitation, and leaving could be a painless task. He was just about to open his mouth to speak when a humming sound interrupted him.
"Mmmmmmmâ€¦" Jack pressed his lips together and tilted his head, his mind somewhere far away from the conversation. He reached out and tapped Hiccup's gangly arm, and looked over to him curiously. 'How-do-you-say-this-?' He asked, pointing a finger towards the girl's chest.

>The girl took a step back, looking at his hand, down at her chest, then back up to Jack. She blinked, confused, and turned her attention to Hiccup. "Ah, you mind givin' me a translation?" She asked, her features strained. "Do I have a bug on me or something?"
Hiccup

followed Jack's hand and spotted a name tag pinned onto the girls dirty blue apron. It was pinned on lazily, and tilted slightly more to the left, but Hiccup could make out the name 'Merida' even underneath the peeling fuzzy dog sticker that sat near the upper right of the tag. "I think he just wants to know how to say your name.." He said, squinting slightly to read the fading gray font. He felt a little relieved now that he knew that it was only the name tag Jack was staring at, rather than the girl's bosom, but still his stubborn side wanted another reason to stay annoyed.

>"Oh.." She looked down at her name tag again, and then flashed Jack a smile. "Merida!" She spoke loudly, exaggerating each syllable and leaning forward in hopes that he would hear.
Jack reeled back in response, his eyes wide and surprised. Hiccup had to resist the urge to smack himself in the forehead, instead settling to let out a sigh through his nose.

>The deaf boy gave her a strained, but apologetic look and shrugged his shoulders. He pointed to his ears and shook his head, before shrugging again and letting his hands fall to his sides and clap against his thighs.
"Yeah.. He can't hear you.." Hiccup mumbled, his hand rubbing his arm and tugging at the material of his shirt uncomfortably. "He's all deaf.. Yelling won't work."

>Merida pressed her lips together and willed the heat that swelled in her cheeks to go away. She cleared her throat and clapped her hands together to cause a distraction, and rocked back on her heels. "Well. It was worth a shot. So anyway, back to business, why don't you visit the Glen? I'll buy you a pop."
Jack watched the two converse and shoved his hands into the pocket of his hoodie. His toes curled in his shoes as he flicked his attention between the two, and struggled to catch glimpses of their conversation. The only thing he picked up on though, was 'No.' No to what? He wondered, growing more and more nervous and frustrated with each word.

>"No, It's fine. Really." Hiccup insisted, holding up his hands defensively to the girl. "We have to head back, I have some stuff to do, and so does Jack. Some other time maybe."
Merida huffed, but smiled none the less. "Alright. Come back sometime after 4, and I'll hook you up with a drink. We have a boy who knows sign language in the kitchen.. I don't know. Something to talk about."

>Hiccup nodded and took Jack's wrist. "We'll take you up on that offer some time, but we've really got to go. Um.." He shifted his weight from one leg to another, feeling his left knee begin to flare up with an all too familiar ache. "Good bye I guess. We'll see you around." He waved over his shoulder and began to lead Jack back to the library. Jack himself had said nothing, and gave little protest other than a small hesitance before moving, as he was lead about like a child. He too waved over his shoulder at Merida, and offered a small smile to the girl who returned the gesture. She didn't wait about for long, and as soon as Jack's back was turned, she too disappeared back into the restaurant.<p>

6. Chapter 6

"Okay, so then what happened?" Long nimble fingers danced over ivory keys, eliciting an intricate melody. Hiccup followed along, dragging his bow along the strings of his cello in long deliberate glides. The music flowed like silk, filling the room with a delicate harmony that was only broken by the pair's hushed conversation.

>"I just took him back to the library, and my dad showed shortly after. I mean, I know it's no big deal but it just pissed me off and I don't know why." Hiccup huffed. His eyes were turned down cast,

focusing intently on his fingertips.
"Oh, we're breaking out the naughty words, things must be serious." The girl snickered. With a short puff of air, she blew a lock of her honey blond hair out of her face, only to have the stubborn fringe fall right back into place.

"Damn it.."

>"Shut up Astrid, I am serious. It's bugging the crap out of me." Hiccup continued to complain.
Astrid rolled her eyes, and snuck a peek at Hiccup's profile out of the corner of her eye. His head was bowed, his hair obscuring most of his face from view. However, having known each other since elementary school, Astrid didn't have to see his face to know the scowl that crossed his features.

>"Well what part about it bugged you? Was it the fresh air? Because it sounds like you're just grumpy because your little routine was broken."
Hiccup tossed a glare over his shoulder at the girl. His eyes narrowed, but from the way how his lower lip protruded any malice seemed to disappear behind a pout much like an angry child who had been denied dessert.

>"Astrid. Who let you in here? Don't you have your own class? You don't even play a string instrument. What are you doing with your life?"
Astrid snorted, causing her fingers to slip and end her part of the song with a loud smash of keys. Hiccup sighed and pressed his palm against the strings of his cello to cease the sound, and rested his bow across his thighs. "And I'll have you know, I'm not 'grumpy because my routine was broken. I'm 'grumpy' because I almost killed a deaf kid. Plus, the irony that it was an ambulance of all things is killing me."

>Once Astrid had calmed down enough to muster up a response, she held up a finger and turned in her seat so her back was to the piano.

"Okay, first of all, my class is long since over friend, and your teacher is missing in action, so you should thank me for keeping you company."
"Be still my beating heart Astrid, you shouldn't have." Hiccup dead panned.

>"Secondly... Secondly there are strings inside the piano. Really, if you didn't know that, the. Quite frankly you suck as a musician."
"Ah, yeah. Okay. I knew that, and you know what I meant."

>"Third of all, it doesn't matter what I'm going to do with my life because we're talking about you and your little dilemma, which brings me to point number four."
"Oh God.. Astrid no."

>"You and this little deaf kid and your grumpiness."
"Astrid stop."

>"What exactly is going on?"
"Okay no."

>"You're learning sign language, and you're sharing"
"I need an adult!"

>"Shut your face, you know I'm onto something."
Hiccup threw his head back and sighed. His skinny legs splayed out in front of him, while one hand weakly held his instrument in place between his thighs. "Getting real tired of your bullshit Astrid."

>"Yeah, and I'm getting 'real tired' of listening to rant and rave and giving me nothing to work with." The girl retorted. She leaned forward with her elbows on her elbows on her knees and bore holes into Hiccup's head with her stare. Whether it was the look she was giving him, or the sharp tap of her boots on the linoleum floor that caused Hiccup to make eye contact was a mystery, but for whatever reason the lanky boy knew he would regret his unconscious action. Everyone knew that once she looked into your eyes, Astrid would find a way getting what she wanted, and Hiccup was no stranger to her powers. It was something he not so secretly envied about her, even if this ability was simply caused by charisma.
He swallowed the lump in his throat and tried to turn his focus back to his cello;

straightening his posture and idly picking at the strings to create a deep rhythm that filled the room. However, it was too late as the sound of the creaking of the old and worn piano bench kept drawing him back to attention.

>"Now Hiccup." Astrid drawled. Her voice was laced false sweetness of Venus fly trap; luring its prey in before snapping its jaws shut and devouring it whole. "What exactly was it about today that pissed you off?" The way how she said it, it sounded more like a statement than a question.
"I-I don't know.." Hiccup stammered. His fingers twitched on the strings, moving faster to keep pace with his racing thoughts. "I just.. I don't know."

>Astrid hummed, her lips pressing together as she arched a brow skeptically. "Well, if that's the case, then I think it's time we revisited our previous conversation."
Hiccup groaned and covered his eyes with his free hand. "Dear God no.. I know where this is going and the answer is a big, fat, no."

>"Well if you already knew where I was going, then that means you thought about it."
"Wha- hey, how does that mean anything?"

>"I don't know, you tell me. Just how in depth have you considered your possible homosexuality?"
A tense silence filled the room. Neither said anything for a full minute while the sloppy churn of the beginner's violin class from next door leaked through the walls.

>It was Hiccup who broke the spell, his words sliding out slowly and cautiously as he spoke. "Okay.." He said warily. "I think we're on two different wave lengths here. I thought we were changing the subject to our discussion over Skype last night about you wanting to buy a battle axe on eBay."
Astrid stared at him, annoyance leaking from her every pore. "No Hiccup. We are not talking about my totally justified need for an authentic tribute to not only my, but our Viking heritage. We are talking about the fact that you are in denial about your sexuality."

>Hiccup's mouth formed a small 'o' as he let the statement sink in. "I am not in denial. I am legitimately 8000 percent sure that I am straight."
Astrid hummed again, and took the time to tuck her fringe behind her ear. "Yeah, sure, okay. How about we talk about ninth grade."

>"Oh my God, can you no-"
Hiccup was cut off by a loud, and clearly agitated sigh. "If you want to be that way, fine. We'll come back to that to tomorrow." With the back of her hand Astrid swept her hair out of her face for the umpteenth time that day. "Just tell me what he looks like."

>Hiccup bit back the urge to tell the girl to get a haircut, but when memories of his last experience with the suggestion came to mind, he bit his tongue. "Excuse me?" He said instead as he righted his posture.
"You heard me." The blonde replied. "I hear enough stories about this kid and your little library adventures, that I deserve a half decent description."

>The boy sighed and pursed his lips. "You know, given your attitude during our last topic, I don't really know what you deserve."
"Okay, okay, fair enough." Astrid clapped her hands and leaned forward in her seat. She smiled brightly, but the expression held all the glee of an over worked employee on Christmas eve. "New deal. How about you describe him for me, or I shove that bow down your throat?"

>Hiccup scoffed. "That's not even possible."
"You really want to test me Haddock?"

>A pause, then a sigh. "Not really..."
"Than out with it."

>The boy ran his fingers through his hair and huffed. "I hardly see why it matters what he looks like.. I already told you the important

stuff.."
>"Hiccup..." Astrid warned, causing the other to roll his eyes in annoyance. Tonight, he promised himself, he would make a point to stay offline and avoid any more prying questions.

>"He's... He dyes his hair. And.. Somehow he gets it this really real white." Hiccup rose his hands and slowly waved them around his head as he described it, as if it would help paint the picture. "And.. He's the only one who I've seen manage to do that, cause normally it's this gross blond."
>"What's wrong with blond?" Astrid asked warningly.

>"Nothing's wrong with it, it's just that gross yellowy orangey blond.. You know the one, the one that makes you want to punch yourself in the face?"
>"Can't say I know of a blond of that shade."

>Hiccup waved his hand dismissively at her and shook his head. "Whatever, to each is their own. Besides, you'll know it when you see it. My point is is that he's got this impossible to miss white hair, and it's pretty cool."
>"Sounds cool."

>"It is.. Uhhhh.." The boy rolled his neck, eliciting a loud 'crack' that made Astrid wince in surprise. "He's surprisingly tall.. Like I just found out today that he's taller than he looks."
>"Taller than he looks?" She echoed. "How is that even possible?"

>Hiccup hummed and laced his fingers together. With a grunt he cracked his knuckles, and then shook out the stiffness in his joints. "I mean, I guess he has really long legs. I figured he was taller than me, but when we were sitting there wasn't that much of a difference. Maybe half an inch or so give or take, its hard to tell when you're sitting. But when we're standing, I was about at his ears."
>"Oh, we have a model figure here." The girl said, although she was only half joking.

>"Cute, Astrid. Really." Hiccup ran his fingers through his hair, and flinched when he found the tender lump he received from his fall. Although he knew he shouldn't take his friend seriously, he let his mind linger on the thought of Jack being a model. He certainly had the looks down for it, or so he thought.
>Long legs and a tall, lanky form. Even Hiccup had to admit that he was handsome.. As far as men went.

>"Hello, earth to Hiccup. Are you alright?" Astrid's voice brought him back from his daydreams, and left him feeling foolish for being caught.
>"Yeah, I'm fine." He assured her. "Just think I have a bruise or something.. It's still sore where I fell."

>Astrid furrowed her brows, concern flickering in her eyes briefly. "You sure you're okay? You sure you don't have a concussion or something?"
>"It's not that bad.. I'm sure I'll live." However, before he could finish his sentence, the girl was already on her feet and hovering over him.

>"Don't mind me, continue." She fussed. She angled Hiccup's face downwards so she could study the crown on his head. Her finger's carefully worked through his hair, pausing when she felt his body jolt, and heard him take a sharp breath through his teeth. "There you are..." she mumbled to herself. If they weren't so close to each other, Hiccup would have missed her words.
>"Ow, careful, would you?" He muttered through gritted teeth.

>"It's not my fault you're fragile."
>"I'm not fragile. I just don't appreciate you poking at my bruises."

>"Please, I'm barely touching it." she tutted, parting his hair to get a closer look of the discolored skin beneath. "No wonder you're in such a delightful mood today.. That looks pretty sore.."
>Hiccup huffed, blowing away a piece of hair that got caught in his mouth. "It is.. Despite popular belief, concrete doesn't really make the

best cushion."

>"Yeah. I would imagine not."
"It doesn't help that Jack landed right on top of me.." Hiccup closed his eyes and allowed himself to relax into Astrid's touch. The feeling of her hands toying with his hair was something he hadn't realized he missed. He sighed, his shoulders sagging as he loosened his grip on the neck of his cello. Astrid was well aware of this, but said nothing on it and continued to play with his roots.

>"Anyway, you were saying?" She pressed, eager to break the silence. "I know you like it, but don't fall asleep on me."
A small smile played on Hiccup's lips as he let out a small breathy chuckle. "I'm not going to sleep.." He insisted. "But just for a test, what was it I was saying?"

>Astrid smirked and resisted the urge to press onto the boy's bruise. "You were painting me a rather lovely picture of your new little toy. That's all."
"You get a B plus at best. He's a friend, not a toy."

>"History never was my favorite subject, but regardless. Do go on."
Hiccup tried to peer up at her through his bangs, but her hands kept his head angled towards his lap, and the most he could see was her chest. "What else do you want me to say? I'm not the best at descriptions..."

>"Anything, just give me something to work with."
"Why don't I just take a stalker reel for you while I'm at-ah!" Hiccup jumped and let out a loud yelp when he felt an unwanted pressure on his skull. Astrid snickered and gently rubbed the spot to soothe the most of the pain she had caused.

>"Poor baby." she cooed. "Maybe if you just do what I told you to do, that oowie wouldn't hurt as much?"
"Jerk." he muttered in response. "Totally uncalled for.."

>"Want me to kiss it better?"
"No, but I have this bruise on my ass you are more than welcome to kiss."

>As he said this, Astrid moved her hands from his scalp to cup his cheeks instead, and turn his face upwards to look at her. She pressed her palms against his cheeks until his mouth puckered and his face scrunched in her grip.
"Okay, just for that, I'm getting a picture of him too. And secondly, you keep avoiding subject, and don't think I don't know what that means."

>Any protest Hiccup could have made was muffled by the girl's grip on his face.
"Now, I'm going to let you go, but before I do, you have to promise to be a good boy. Okay?"

>All she got in return was a narrow eyed glare, although all effect it may have had was lost by Hiccup's currently contorted features.
"Ugh, now aren't you just the cutest thing." She cooed, finally freeing the boy from her grip.

>Hiccup rolled his jaw and massaged his reddened cheeks with his fingertips. "Honestly, there's not a lot left to say.. He's.. I don't know.. He's got nice eyes. And I'm not taking any pictures. Do you have any idea how creepy that is?"
"What is it about his eyes that make them nice?" Astrid asked. She blatantly ignored Hiccup's deceleration, much to the other's dismay, and crossed the room back to her original perch by the piano. She sat back down in her seat and turned so she faced the yellowing keys of the baby grand. While she began to rattle off a set of scales, Hiccup sighed and continued on with his description.

>"Well.." he drawled as he picked up his bow once more. Strangely enough, when the music filled his ears he felt much more comfortable. "I guess.. They're a really nice color.. They're brown, but.. Warm.. Like hot chocolate or something.. And when he smiles it just.. Lights up his whole face. The corners of his eyes crinkle up, and.." Hiccup

chuckled at this, a soft sound that blended in with the calming tune of Chopin's *Étude in E Tristesse* op. 10 no. 3. "He has dimples, but only on his left cheek. Isn't that the funniest thing?"
Astrid hummed in agreement as a sly, knowing smile crossed her features. She played along with him, seamlessly slipping out of her scales to match the boy's melody.

>"And.. He has freckles, but you look closely. And.. He has this really pale skin that makes his eyes stand out.. Especially with those thick, dark lashes.."
Hiccup hadn't realized it, but he had begun to smile to himself, a picture becoming clear in his mind. Yes, today had been annoying, but all in all he had enjoyed Jack's company. It was nice to talk to someone other than Astrid, even if no words were passed between them. There was just something about the peculiar boy that drew him in, and Hiccup just couldn't place his finger on it quite yet.

>Nearly a full minute had passed before Astrid spoke again. "You should bring him by sometime. I'm sure he'll like it."
Hiccup jolted, surprised by her voice. He hadn't realized that he had zoned out again, lost in both his thoughts, and the music. "Huh?" His fingers slipped, causing him to accidentally skip over a note as he blinked stupidly at the girl.

>"Come on, it'll be fun. Plus I want to meet him."
"Astrid.."
Hiccup bit the inside of his cheek and slowed his pace on his instrument as he thought. "You know he's deaf. He's not going to have any fun here. That's like inviting a blind person to a movie theatre."

>"How do you know?" she pressed. While Hiccup slowed his pace, Astrid increased hers, her fingers quickly dancing over the Keys with a practiced art. "You know, the term 'deaf and dumb' is horribly out dated."
"I never said he was dumb, I'm just saying how can he enjoy music if he can't hear? Its kinda unfair." Hiccup argued.

>"Unfair, yes. But you of all people should be able to relate to that."
Hiccup's fingers froze on the strings, pausing for a few slow seconds before resuming their diligent work. "Low blow Astrid."

>Astrid glanced over her shoulder quickly to catch a glimpse at the boy's figure, before turning back to the keys. "Maybe, but you get my point? They said you wouldn't be able to walk again.. And yet you climb up three sets of stairs everyday with that clunker of a cello case. Now what does that mean to you?"
Hiccup took a long exhale through his nose and closed his eyes. He ceased his playing and straightened his instrument so he could lean forward in his seat and study the fine details of the cello's spruce top. "I guess.. Anything's possible?"

>Astrid smiled and stopped playing as well. She turned in her seat again and faced her friend with a wry grin. "One more thing." She said, pointing a finger at him. "Music isn't just about what you hear, it's what you feel. It's an emotion and an experience, just like the little stories you read in your books." While she said this, her phone began to buzz in the pocket of her worn leather jacket. Hiccup waited patiently as
She checked her messages and typed out a quick reply to the sender. During this time, he also mulled over her words, idly plucking at his cello's strings in a repetitive string of notes.

>"My dad's here to pick me up." Astrid said when she looked up from her phone.
Hiccup hummed and gave a small dismissive nod, while he ran his thumb over his strings. He tried not to notice the creak of the piano bench as Astrid got up, and stubbornly kept his gaze down on his hands when he heard the girl stalk towards him.

>Surprisingly, Hiccup felt her hand on the back of his neck, gently tilting his head downward once more. Before he could ask what she was doing, he felt her lips press against against his crown, just above his still aching bruise. "Sorry I poked your lump, but in all fairness we really need to work on your emotional block you got going on there." When she pulled away, she paused, looking him over before deciding to ruffle his hair. Hiccup squawked, waving a hand to feebily bat hers away. Astrid was too quick however, and chuckled as she leapt back.
"Yeah, yeah.." He grunted as he watched her retreating figure. "And just so you know, Attitude in E Trissese is meant to be played slowly."

>Astrid chuckled, stopping near the door to scoop up her backpack. The half a dozen key chains that clung to every pocket jangled loudly as she shifted it onto her back, and adjusted its weight so it hung comfortably off her right shoulder. "Yeah, well, I tried something new, and guess what? I liked it. Why don't you give it a try sometime?"
Hiccup rolled his eyes at her, his lower lip protruding in a familiar pout. "Still real tired of your bullshit."

>Astrid just shook her head at this and grinned. "Oh, and before I go..." she said, her hand hovering over the doorknob. "You are the gayest little shit I've ever met. You should have seen your face while describing lover boy there."
Hiccup tensed and swiveled his head in her direction so fast it could have been on a roller. "If I'm gay it'd be all on your hands Astrid!"

>The girl just laughed and slipped out of the room. "I could say the same for you Haddock."<p>

7. Chapter 7

'I can't believe I'm doing this...' Hiccup berated himself as his eyes continued to wander over to Jack.

The boy in question had his head bowed over his notebook as he usually did; his face serious as his hand feverishly marked the page. Judging by his movements Hiccup had long ago come to the conclusion that Jack simply couldn't have been writing anything. Not unless of course his writing resembled chicken scratch, which wasn't something Hiccup wanted to accept as an excuse. It had to be a drawing of some sort, he thought.

Hiccup worried his lower lip between his teeth while his fingers drummed anxiously on the pages of his newest novel. The curiosity was driving him mad, but so far he had managed to take pride in his self-control.

He had been watching the boy for longer than he cared to admit, but so long as Jack remained oblivious, Hiccup decided to spoil himself with stolen glances and greedy stares. He pondered on the idea of Jack being an artist, and toyed with the images of the boy splattered in paint and charcoal on his fingertips.

After he adjusted to the thought, Hiccup decided he liked that image, finding the picture he created in his mind almost what he would call 'cute.' However, he was quick to remember his primary objective.

Somehow, Astrid had worked her way into his subconscious, and reminded him that he had owed her a photograph. While the entire idea

had seemed silly, especially considering the great lengths he had described Jack, Hiccup had remained powerless to the girl's wishes.

'With friends like you, who needs enemies.' Hiccup thought as his hand dipped into his jacket pocket. He lingered there for a moment, willing his hand to move before Jack realized what he was doing. However, as usual his nervous habit got the better of him, and all the negative outcomes began to play over in his mind.

Thoughts of Jack growing annoyed with him, and dubbing him a 'stalker' plagued the boy, even though the thought seemed terribly out of Jack's character. Hiccup was certain that if he just asked him, the boy would happily oblige; but that would involve Hiccup asking, and explaining why he needed the picture in the first place. 'Hi, I tell my jerk of a best friend all about you, and although you've never met she wants me to take a picture. That's not creepy, is it? So smile pretty,' didn't quite sit right with him.

He gripped the now warm plastic of his cell phone almost painfully tight, willing his hand to move from his pocket. Carefully, as if he were approaching a wild animal, he pulled out his phone, and instead turned it over and over in his lap.

'Don't rush..' He internally told himself as he pretended to send a text. So far Jack hadn't moved, and Hiccup decided that it was now or never. He coughed, raising the phone to level with his chest and angled his head to peer down at the screen.

It was a difficult task, but soon enough the brunette had managed to fit all of Jack's figure in the frame. Although the angle of the photograph wasn't what Hiccup would have called particularly flattering, he still happily pressed the button to capture the moment. However, had Hiccup been looking at the boy himself, rather than the tiny image, he would have noticed Jack's quizzical expression.

Jack had been peering over the edge of his note book, lips pursed as he studied Hiccup carefully. While he couldn't hear the boy shuffling about, it wasn't hard for him to pick up the odd shifting of the stiff cushions on the window seat. At first he ignored them, trying desperately to make sense of the mish mash of sketches and loose lines on the pages of his book. But with the unfortunate case of art block, distractions easily came by.

When he glanced up at Hiccup, he at first assumed the boy really had been sending a text. But as he continued to fidget, moving his cell phone in a series of odd, and surely uncomfortable jerky movements. It was when Jack caught the brief flash of the phone's camera that Jack's suspicions were confirmed.

Hiccup smiled to himself and brought his knees closer to his chest, unaware of Jack's stare. The boy bit his lip as he tried to contain the proud grin that bore his excitement over his achievement. He pulled his phone to eye level, tossing aside stealth now to favour collecting his prize.

The look of horror that quickly contorted Hiccup's face was enough to draw a laugh from the other that disrupted the silence of the library. This of course did little to sooth the rising redness in

Hiccup's cheek, or the panicked embarrassment that twisted in his stomach.

"Shhh!" Hiccup hissed, flailing his hands uselessly, as if pushing down an invisible platform. He caught a narrow eyed glare from a young woman that poked her head around the row of books to investigate. She brought a finger to her lips, and she didn't waste time in shushing them as well.

"S-sorry," Hiccup stammered out, his auburn locks flicking about as he whipped his head from Jack to face the woman instead. "H-he's deaf, he doesn't know." The woman said nothing, seeming to accept the feeble excuse with a roll of her eyes, and disappeared back behind the shelf.

During this time Jack had thankfully stopped laughing, his hands that were pressed tightly against his mouth muffled a small, final hiccup that signaled he was done. Although, laughter still danced in his eyes, laugh lines appearing at the corners, no doubt giving away the cheek splitting grin that his hands hid.

That's right. Laugh it up. Hiccup thought as he folded his arms around his knees, and buried his face in the false security of his legs. Jack was staring right at him in that picture, and no doubtedly saw his antics. Jack knew he was taking a picture of him, and yet didn't do anything. Jack let him make a fool of himself, and then proceeded to laugh about it, drawing everyone's attention so they too could gossip and laugh at him.

He didn't know why he felt so mad at Jack, after all, it was himself that had thought it would be a good idea to try and sneak a picture, a picture Astrid had demanded.

That's it. He thought. Astrid was to blame for this. Perhaps he just needed someone to blame in the heat of the moment. Someone to be the scapegoat and to ease some of the embarrassment off his shoulders. If only that woman hadn't have glared at us..

Hiccup's thoughts jumbled as worst case scenarios ran rapid through his mind. Jack walking off laughing, being kicked out of his safe haven for being such a nuisance, that woman telling all her friends about the stupid boy and his friend who made such a ruckus... Deep down Hiccup knew that the majority of his imaginings were incredibly exaggerated, but the growing anxiety blurred the shaping of his common sense.

Slowly, Jack's giggling faded into nothing, and he was left staring at the huddled form of his friend. He knew he should have felt bad for the boy, but for the moment he let him wallow in misery as a weak form of punishment.

When he decided Hiccup had enough solitude, Jack crept over and gingerly placed a hand on the top of Hiccup's head. His fingers tangled in the boy's hair as he playfully tousled it, and unconsciously took note of how soft it felt beneath his hand. All the reaction Jack got from the other was a short grunt, which of course went unheard.

Hiccup huffed, his eyes pressing shut as he willed up the nerve to move. He could practically feel Jack's grin looking down at him, and

tensed under the hand that lingered in his hair. He could feel that hand move, and ghost down to his back where it made small soothing circles between his shoulder blades. Hiccup didn't want to admit it, but he was grateful as it brought a calming distraction.

He let Jack's hand linger and trail up and down his back until Hiccup felt enough at ease to raise his head. He peeked over his knees, dusty jade green eyes glaring half-heartedly at the other.

Jack couldn't help chuckling softly as their eyes met; finding Hiccup's expression much too amusing not too. He looked much like an over grown child in Jack's eyes, pouting while he sat in time out.

'What-the-fuck-were-you-doing?' Jack asked, honestly curious as to why Hiccup wanted his picture in the first place. He hunched over so his hands always remained in Hiccup's line of vision, and gave the other a lopsided grin.

Hiccup didn't respond, and turned his head slightly to face the window. He could still feel the blush hot on his cheeks, and was second guessed his decision that he was ready to face Jack. Cool fingers tapped him twice on his cheek bone before carefully tilting his head to face Jack once more.

The two stared at each other for a long moment, before Hiccup couldn't hold it in any more. A smile broke out across his face, and he ducked his head to hide it in his arms again. His shoulders shook with the effort to hold in his laughter, realizing just how foolish he had been acting. Of course, he was still horribly embarrassed to be caught in the act, but at least anxiety's strong grip on him loosened, allowing him to laugh at himself.

"God I'm stupid.." He whispered to himself as he shook his head dismissively. He gripped the fabric of his jeans as if to reassure himself, and lifted his head to face Jack again. This time he relaxed his shoulders and rested his chin on his knees, although his eyes still skillfully avoided Jack's own.

With the tension now eased, Jack tried again at gaining Hiccup's attention. The heel of his hand brushed lightly against the boy's forehead before his fingers slipped up into his hair again. There it stayed, pinning back Hiccup's fringe, that made the rather annoying habit of hiding the boy's eyes from view.

Jack grinned, finding the whole ordeal quite over-dramatic, but also completely hilarious. Hiccup stared back up at him, and this time the smile calmed him, rather than humiliated him, and he returned it with one of his own. He certainly wasn't ready when that hand withdrew, braking the contact between them.

"I-repeat-what-was-that-about?" Jack asked, shifting in his seat so he sat cross legged and facing Hiccup. Hiccup sighed and straightened his posture, running his own hand over his hair to hopefully duplicate the soothing action.

"I-am-bad-at-taking-S-E-L-F-I-E-S?" He tried, his eyebrows creasing in a way he hoped would elicit sympathy. Jack obviously didn't buy it.

"I-would-say-so-considering-the-camera-wasn't-faci ng-you."

Hiccup sighed, and knew there was no way to get out of this without sounding like a creep, so he decided the truth, however hard it would be to explain, would be best.

His hands wavered, beginning to sign before stopping, only creating lines of gibberish as he stumbled over his words. In in a language where he didn't have to speak, Hiccup found it hard for his thoughts to find their way to his tongue. "I...

Told-my-friend-about-you-and-she-wanted-proof-you- were-real." He of course left out the long anecdote where Astrid also brought up the thought that Hiccup possibly liked Jack as more than a friend, not wanting to make things any more awkward than needs be.

Jack watched Hiccup's hands with a steadily growing smirk, and rolled his shoulders with confidence. Hiccup spoke of him to his friends, and this filled Jack with a sort of childish glee.

"You-know-you-could-have-just-asked-right?"

Of course Hiccup knew this was true, but the voices that nagged at the back of his head told him other-wise, no matter what Jack said. So rather than answer, Hiccup just shook his head and turned his attention to a distracting bird twittering away outside.

He was unprepared as a hand pushed back his shoulders, and had to stifle a yelp as his back pressed against the wall. His eyes widened, focusing on Jack suddenly looming above him, his hands pinning him in place.

Hiccup wasn't sure what he expected just then, but it wasn't for Jack to turn his back and lean against him. Suddenly Jack's entire body was leaning against him, and the crisp smell of whatever soap Jack used filled his nose as his hair tickled against his skin.

For some reason Hiccup's hands had found their way to Jack's waist, circling around until his palms rested on the flat of his stomach. Although his heart was pounding, Hiccup felt strong, laying there with another body laying in his arms. He smiled against the snowy white locks, loosing himself in the moment and forgetting who it was he was holding. It was then he noticed Jack's arm move, his own cell phone clasped loosely in his hand.

It was an older generation iPhone, and so much different from Hiccup's own aging flip phone. Hiccup watched as Jack's fingers flew over the screen, quickly bringing up his own camera.

Hiccup grimaced at his own face. How was it still so red? He wondered as he ducked his head to hide his face from the lens. Jack laughed lightly and brought his other hand over to awkwardly tap Hiccup's temple. From such a simple touch, Hiccup easily knew what Jack wanted, and that there was no getting out of it. He rose his head, a self-conscious smile contorting his face.

Before he knew it, the camera clicked loudly, and Hiccup made a metal note to let Jack know about the noise later. He was surprised when the other didn't move, other than to lower his hand and tap away at his phone. Hiccup didn't object to this, and even let his shoulders relax as he held Jack between his legs. He felt as if this should be strange, yet he didn't want to pull away. After all, this was Jack.

Relaxed and easy going Jack. His friend, and.. This was what friends do.. Right?

He could recall a brief memory of some girls laughing and sitting in a similar position to this around school. It was familiar and friendly, right? They weren't dating or anything.

Hiccup's thoughts were interrupted by a buzzing to his left. In his embarrassment he had cast his phone to the side, and now it was wedged between the cushions and the window. He reached over, and found that Jack had sent him a message. Strange, but he opened it any way, not sure what he'd expect.

Hiccup couldn't see the smug smile Jack had on from his reclining position against his stomach, but Hiccup didn't care, too busy staring at the picture on his phone. It was of the two of them, and Hiccup found himself chuckling at the photo, then saving it. Before he could stop himself, his fingers danced over the buttons, typing out a message to accompany the photo on its next journey.

"Astrid. Suck my dick. I told you so."

8. Chapter 8

Oh wow.. Thank you everyone for all the positive feedback on the last chapter. All of you are amazing!

First off, I'd love to point out this lovely fan art I've been given, like.. Wow. This people deserve so much love right here: [post/51445290211/hiccup-followed-jacks-hand-and-spotted-a-name-tag](https://www.deviantart.com/post/51445290211/hiccup-followed-jacks-hand-and-spotted-a-name-tag) Look at this beautiful Merida! Exactly how I imagined her 3

Also, still die a little bit of happiness every time I see this gem: [post/57360403256/i-may-or-may-not-have-stumbled-across-a-fanfiction](https://www.deviantart.com/post/57360403256/i-may-or-may-not-have-stumbled-across-a-fanfiction) So cute!

One more thing, then I promise I'll let you read chapter 8 shh shh shh shhh

Wowowowow all you reviewers I'm cry because wowow 3 without you guys, this story would have ended as a one shot after chapter one. You are all wonderful, and I'll try my darnedest to keep updating!

Hiccup had lost track of how long they had been laying together, but one thing was for sure: Jack showed no signs of moving.

His body weighed heavily against Hiccup's chest, not that the other was about to complain. It felt somehow relaxing to just to feel that added weight, which was strange to him, considering Hiccup often went out of his way to avoid physical contact. Even with Astrid, Hiccup liked to keep to his personal space as much as possible.

At some point Hiccup realized that his hands had once again found their way snaking around Jack's torso. If the other had any qualms with this, he thankfully said nothing on it. If anything, Jack seemed to be enjoying the attention he was being given. He relaxed in Hiccup's hold, his long legs stretched out in front of him and crossed at the ankle.

Jack felt Hiccup sigh, and tilted his head back as far as his neck would allow. He blinked owlishly up at the boy, pale strands of hair tickling against Hiccup's jaw. Caught off guard, Hiccup pulled his head back in surprise, straining to get away from the sensation.

Their eyes met briefly, and at such a close proximity, Hiccup swore he could count each one of the faint freckles that splattered across the other's cheeks. Jack flashed a cheeky grin that made Hiccup chuckle, and stuck out the tip of his tongue playfully. What Hiccup didn't expect however, was the warm, wet sensation as that tongue pressed against the groove of his jaw.

Hiccup's eyes widened in shock, and he visibly shuddered at the feeling. He squawked loudly in protest and all but shoved Jack off of his lap. He rubbed vigorously at the damp patch of skin where Jack had struck, while the other's body landed with a loud thump on the floor beside them. The contact sounded painful, and while the boy was clutching onto his shoulder tightly, it was a much greater effort for Jack to keep from laughing.

Jack's face was flushed and his free hand was clasped tightly over his mouth. Small wheezing sounds escaped past his fingers in a series of mute laughter. Hiccup shot the young man a disgusted look, his own fingers protectively covering the spot he was licked.

Honestly, Hiccup doubted he would ever understand Jack.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Astrid had been lying on Hiccup's bedroom floor for at least an hour. Unlike every other day, Saturday was one where neither was free of any schedule. While it gave them both time to relax for once, it also meant Hiccup would spend his day cooped up in his room by himself, tinkering away at whatever it was that caught his interest at the moment. This was something Astrid knew well, and while she knew the boy needed his space, there was such a thing as too much of a good thing, and took it upon her to keep the boy from secluding himself as he usually did.

"Hiccup." Astrid called out, not moving from her spot on the floor. The faded carpet itched against her cheek, and her shirt was starting to ride up, exposing a fraction of her stomach. "Hiccup. ... Hiccup. Sometimes I feel like you don't really listen to me."

The only answer she received was a muffled grunt from the bed above her. She rolled onto her side, and traced the outline of thin, calloused fingers that brushed the carpet with her eyes. "Hiccup. Hiccup. Hiccup. Wake up. You have an attractive female in your room and you are sleeping through it. Hiccup. You're a homosexual."

"I'm not a homosexual." Came the muffled reply from the cocoon on blankets.

"Oh honey.." Astrid reached over and held his hand between both of hers. "You are such a homosexual."

"I am not a hoMOSESSUAL!" Astrid burst out laughing, and rolled out of the way as Hiccup ripped his hand away from hers and proceeded to flail his skinny limbs about on his bed. Blankets thrashed about blindly until Hiccup stilled, silent as he was before and face down

on his bed. The sheets pooled around his waist and slowly began to slip over the side of the bed. Despite this, Hiccup made no move to adjust them.

Astrid meanwhile clambered up to join Hiccup on his bed, and sat with her legs crossed at his side. "Shh.." She cooed, patting his boney shoulder and dropping her voice to a whisper. "You're a homosess-ual."

Hiccup grunted loudly as he felt her move his arms to rest at his sides. The blanket was being pulled over him once more, and tucked beneath him, leaving him trapped in their warmth. "What do you want Astrid. It's Saturday. I want to sleep."

"It's one-thirty. Time for sleep is over. It's time to get up, and greet the day, and shower because you smell and the sun is shining-

"Astrid, while you have some very solid arguments, I'd like to re-iterate my earlier statement that it is indeed Saturday."

"And you spend too much time inside, and also I'd like to remind you that it's two against one."

Hiccup sighed loudly; not needing to ask who the third party was that Astrid was talking about. For the past half hour he'd been listening to Toothless, his over-sized pet puttering around his room, and whining to Astrid. He could hear the large canine panting somewhere to his right, and knew that it was only a matter of time before he too clambered up onto his bed and tried his hand at rousing him.

"You two... Both. Suck." Hiccup complained. He whined loudly when Astrid rolled him onto his back, and tugged the blanket back over him and tucked the ends under him. "Why would you do that?"

Astrid just shrugged and gave the boy a hard shove that sent him tumbling over the edge of the bed. With his arms pinned to his sides by the blanket, Hiccup was left defenseless as gravity introduced him to the floor. "Ow, geez.. Now why would you do that?"

The girl peered over the edge of the bed and grinned mischievously at him. "Well, I tried asking, reasoning, and I've been lying on your floor since noon. Obviously force would be my next course of action.

Concerned for his tiny master's welfare, Toothless trotted over and sniffed at the crumpled heap on the floor. Hiccup groaned and sat up, freeing his arms from his confines to rub at his now tender hip. "Well, at least you're starting to get the whole 'Violence is the last resort' thing." Astrid just chuckled at this and swung her legs over the edge of the bed. Before Hiccup could protest, she stooped down and snatched the blanket from him.

"Yeah yeah, I'm a bitch for introducing you to sun light. Now come on. I'll get your leg."

It took an over all of an hour and a half to get Hiccup showered, dressed and fed, but by three o'clock the pair were out of the house with Toothless trotting beside them. The mere mention of a walk had

sent the animal into a tizzy, and while Hiccup wasn't nearly as enthusiastic as his friend, his arguments died on his tongue at the sight of the over-excited dog. Besides, now fully awake, and with the promise of Starbucks ahead of them, Hiccup was in a considerably better mood.

After about two blocks of silence, it was Hiccup who spoke up and broke the spell. "So, have you decided what you wanted to play yet for the competition?"

Astrid rolled her eyes and sighed. "No, but I'm guessing you do? Geez, that's months away." The competition, as Hiccup called it, was well known throughout their music school. It wasn't so much of a competition per say, as it was a performance. Almost everyone in the school would participate, and a lucky few may be offered the occasional scholarship. Astrid herself wasn't all too interested in making a career out of her music, but rather preferred to perform for the pure thrill of performing. Hiccup had often dubbed her a show off, and the girl had yet to deny it.

"Well, unlike you, I like to be prepared." The boy mumbled, looking down at his hand. The thick black leash that held Toothless at bay wrapped tightly around his palm and contrasted heavily against his fair skin. "I was thinking maybe Bach's cello suite would be good.. I don't know. But everyone plays the classics, and I'd kinda like to stand out."

"Yeah, standing out might be nice. Might help you advance, you know?"

"I figured as much. Thanks for the advice."

"Any time."

After a lengthy walk that had Hiccup's knees aching, the pair came up to the familiar building and stopped just outside the doors. Astrid held out her hand, waiting impatiently for Hiccup to hand over his money. It had become a well-practiced routine for them, and Hiccup didn't even have to tell Astrid his order before she disappeared inside. While his predictability came as an annoyance in many ways, at times like this it was useful.

Hiccup sat down on the small bench outside and affectionately scratched Toothless' head. Hiccup grinned happily as the dog seemed to smile from the affection, and beat his tail against the concrete. Their moment of rest didn't last long however, within the minute Astrid came darting out. She reached out her hand and smacked Hiccup behind the head as she passed speed walking ahead of them.

"Abort mission. I repeat: Abort mission!"

Hiccup rubbed the back of his head and shot the girl a glare, but followed after her anyway. "What the hell?" He said, speeding up to a jog to keep pace. His legs cried out in protest, but he ignored it.

"Fuck my life; I am so not in the mood for this." She muttered. Once they were a safe distance away from the shop, she spared a glance behind her and began to slow down. "I swear, he is everywhere. I am this close to telling him I'm a lesbian, I swear to God."

"Ah." That was all that needed to be said. Hiccup snickered, well aware of his friend's not-so-secret admirer. "Beloved again?"

"I swear to God Hiccup.. I will roll you into traffic if you say that again. How are you two related again?"

It had been a little known fact that for the past three years Astrid had been battling a fight to ignore a rather determined admirer. Hiccup's own cousin to be exact. While it was annoying to Astrid, Hiccup had to admit that he shouldn't be laughing either, as his friendship with the girl often lead to his brute of a cousin taking it out on him.

"I don't know. Pretty sure there was a mix up in the hospital or something. But while you're convincing him that you're a lesbian, want to try and let him know that we're not dating?"

Astrid snorted and stopped walking when she noticed Hiccup beginning to limp. Without a word the two sunk down into a crouch, Hiccup's back leaning against the wall of a building. "I'm sure if he sees you making out with Mister Jack there, he'll get the drift." Her hand hovered over his shoulder, not quite touching him, but close enough to steady him if needs be. "You good?"

"For the last time: I don't like him like that." Hiccup insisted. "Just great."

"Whatever you say, but you say some crazy shit in your sleep man."

"Wait, what?"

Astrid just shrugged her shoulders and rocked back on her heels until she sat flat on the ground with her legs crossed in front of her and out of the way of the pedestrians. She had a feeling that they would be there for a while.

Hiccup muttered under his breath, knowing that he wouldn't get a proper answer out of the girl unless he really pried; a thing he simply couldn't be motivated to do. He let her have this small victory and made himself comfortable beside the girl, secretly thankful for the break. He motioned for Toothless, who had been worriedly watching his master with frantic eyes to sit beside him. The dog complied, sitting at attention beside the boy, ready to protect him from any harm.

Hiccup smiled softly at this, and reached out a hand to reward his furry friend with an enthusiastic scratch along his back, earning a delighted yip.

While he lavished the dog in attention, Astrid flicked her attention to the pair, to the people that passed by them. She kept watch, as if by staring hard enough she could keep the throngs of pedestrians from stepping too close. That was when she noticed something.

Her sky blue eyes narrowed, and she pursed her lips as she peered through the crowd, struggling to focus on something on the other side of the street. Curious, she leaned over and gave Hiccup a harsh smack on his arm. "Hey, I could be wrong.. But does that guy over there

look familiar?"

"Why is it always violence with you?" He muttered, rubbing his arm tentatively. His eyes followed her hand, straining to pick out the person she was referring to. The first thing he noticed was a mop of white hair, and a tall lanky frame. At first glance he had assumed that it was an elderly man, but even at a distance there was no mistaking that cheeky grin.

Hiccup beamed, an action that didn't go unnoticed by the girl beside him. "Of all the places.. I thought he lived down town.."

"So that _was _the elusive Jack Overland from the rather delightful picture you sent." Astrid smirked, standing up from her seat on the ground. She extended a hand to Hiccup, who took it graciously and followed in suite. "Wasn't sure, but you were right. That hair is hard to miss."

"Told you." Hiccup announced a bit too enthusiastically. "I wonder what he's doing here."

Hiccup took Astrid's hand and was about to tug her towards the nearest cross walk when he saw something made him feel sick to his stomach. Not only was Jack not alone, but he was with young woman whose arm was linked with his.

9. Chapter 9

Okay guys, I'm really sorry for those who have been waiting for this next chapter. I know its been ages, and you guys have been wonderful and so patient and omg thank you so much to those have stuck with me through this unannounced haitus.

I'm not dropping the fic, but this chapter is much much shorter than I intended it to be. It was supposed to stretch on for longer, but the wait has been so long, I think I'll just post what I have so far.

School and work have kinda drained my writing inspiration, so yes, I am going to take a while to update. But still, I'm going to try and make the next chapter longer, and toss in more Jack and Hiccup lovins' but for now this is the best I have. If it means anything, Astrid is a sneaky little wench.

Chapter 9

A feeling of dread washed over Hiccup, leaving him with a queer emptiness inside him. They watched Jack and the girl walk down the street opposite of them and disappear in the throngs of people, to be lost in the crowd.

"Oh..." Was all the boy could manage to say at first. "I guess he's busy... Betterâ€| Better let him be then."

Astrid glanced over at her friend, feeling his fingers fall lax in her hand. Before he could pull them away, she gave them a quick, reassuring squeeze before using her free hand to give him a swift punch in the shoulder.

Hiccup cringed and recoiled from Astrid's grip. "Ow, geez... What the hell? Why is it always violence with you?"

The girl rolled her eyes and nodded in the direction Jack and his apparent 'friend' had left in. Perhaps it was her protective instincts she felt towards Hiccup that fueled her emotions, but Astrid began to feel a strange resentment towards the white haired boy; as if he had chosen to be with the mystery girl for the single purpose of upsetting Hiccup. It was silly, considering she had never even met him, and Jack was well within his right to be with another, (she wasn't delusional by any means) but still, that nagging feeling was there none the less wither she wanted to admit it or not.

"Come on." she said, giving Hiccup's hand a sharp tug. "You looked pretty excited back there. Let's go and say hi."

Hiccup curled his lip at the thought, and pressed his heels into the concrete, standing stiff. "Dude, no.. He's got his girlfriend with him. How about we don't become the third wheel."

Not the least bit deterred by the boy's defiance, Astrid gave his arm another yank, firmly pulling him off balance and causing him to stumble in the direction she wanted to go. Even if she wasn't fond of Jack at the moment, Astrid had been curious about the strange boy that seemed to enthrall her usually distant friend. "Well good thing there's two of us then. That makes four." She said looking in Hiccup's eyes. She wasn't about to let this one go.

Toothless, who had been watching the ordeal unfold with mixed feelings had rose to his feet, ears alert and ready to act. He was used to such behavior from the familiar blond haired human, and even though he wasn't fond of his master's rough treatment, he didn't react to the scene with a little more than a curious quirk of his head, and an anxious yip.

Hiccup meanwhile groaned, throwing his head back in an exaggerated fit of dramatics. "Astrid, no. How many times do I have to say it?"

In response the girl huffed and set her free hand on her hip and pursed her lips; her eyes narrowing and baring into Hiccup. Even though no words passed between them, Hiccup could practically see the wheels turning in her head. But strangely enough, rather than coming up with some new argument to justify her desire, Astrid's expression softened, and her form relaxed somewhat; her shoulders relaxing before she sighed, and pressed her hands into her pockets. "Fine." She declared her voice distant and forlorn. "If you want to let him go, we'll just move on. Not like we had anything better to do today."

Hiccup blinked, his ever expressive face twisting into one of disbelief. "Uh.. Right." He replied slowly while he arched an eye brow curiously. Taken aback by his friend's sudden change of heart, the boy shifted his weight from foot to foot, going silent as if waiting for some sort of continuation of the girl's declaration. When none such came, he was left to watch in surprise as she pressed her hands into her well worn leather jacket and resumed walking, all as if nothing had transpired at all. It was odd, to say the least, and the boy did not trust it in the least.

He worried his lower lip between his slightly crooked teeth and trailed after Astrid, his head bowed while he contemplated the odd growing knot that was settling like a rock in his stomach. Even though he had gotten his way, Hiccup still felt uneasy about the whole situation. Honestly he had expected Astrid to put up more of a fight than this.

It wasn't until a decent block and a half after Hiccup had managed to catch up to the girl's long confident strides that he had finally spoke. His voice though, still holding his usual snarky tone, was cautious and brought Astrid back to the days before they had settled into their current friendship, when Hiccup was just that odd boy who sat in the farthest corner of the lunch room. Although she did not show it on her face, his tone pleased her somewhat, as if it were some small victory to be won.

"Soâ€¦" Hiccup began, tossing his gaze over his shoulder briefly before looking back down to Toothless, who trotted happily beside them. "Sinceâ€¦ You know, Starbucks is apparently out of the question, did you have anything else in mind?"

Astrid just shrugged indifferently, and swiped her hair out of her pale blue eyes with the back of a calloused hand. "I don't know." She hummed, staring off at some unknown destination ahead of them. "Guess we can head back to my place if you want."

Hiccup seemed to mull over the idea, his expressing twisting as he thought. His nose scrunched up, finding that although Astrid's house would certainly be ideal for him, where he could finally rest his aching legs, Toothless wouldn't be particularly fond of such a place. Lately Astrid's Golden Retriever, Stormfly, had taken a new interest in Toothless that the dog did not appreciate. Not to mention the over-sized black Newfoundland had spent most of the morning as well as yesterday indoors, it wouldn't seem fair to take him back to another house. "I don't knowâ€¦" Hiccup decided, glancing back up to Astrid as he spoke. He studied her profile warily, still unsure of what to make of her new disposition, or wither or not it could be trusted. "Toothless was pretty psyched to go outsideâ€¦ Seems kinda like a douche move to just take him in again."

Astrid nodded thoughtfully and clicked her tongue. "Yeah, guess you got a point. But then again, you are a bit of a douche bag to begin with."

Hiccup shot her a look. "What the fuck? Why are you so rude? Stop it. Do you ever just stop to think about how I feel and how that affects my feelings? Now take me and my dog to the park, you ass. We want to have some fun."

It was with a muted chuckle that Astrid rolled her eyes and replied. "Hiccup, it's what I'm here for. You need me or your head will swell with hot air. And face the facts. Your head is already huge." With their new destination in mind, Astrid picked up her pace and began leading the three of them down another ally way.

"My head is not big." Hiccup argued pointedly, Toothless in tow.

"Honey, it's a miracle you managed to squeeze out of your mother's vagina."

End
file.